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REVIEWS AND NOTICES.

MEDICAL STATISTICS OF THE NEGRO.

The Surgical Peculiarities of the American Negro. By Rudolph Matas, M.D., Professor of Surgery, Medical Department of Tulane University of Louisiana.

In this monograph, a reprint from the *Transactions of the American Surgical Association*, Dr. Matas has placed at the command of the student of the race traits and tendencies of the American negro an important body of facts pertaining to the surgical and other peculiarities of the negro at the South.

The work is very largely statistical, and the tables are based almost exclusively on the records of the New Orleans Charity Hospital during the period 1884-93. The hospital population during the period under observation consisted of 45,182 white patients and 19,239 colored patients, of which 5667 died among the former and 4384 among the latter during the decade under observation. This would give a rate of mortality of 12.54 per 1000 for the former and of 22.79 per 1000 for the latter, or an excess of 81.7 per cent of mortality among the colored hospital population. This result is practically in harmony with the mortality experience of the colored population of New Orleans in general, which during 1890-94 exceeded by 58.6 per cent that of the white population.

In part this excess is probably due to a tendency on the part of the negro to seek hospital accommodation at an advanced stage of his diseases; but this would account at most for but a small part of the large excess of mortality prevailing among this race.

With only a very few exceptions, the rate of fatality of the various diseases is much greater among the colored population than among the whites. There are only six instances, and these mostly insignificant, where the rate of fatality is heavier among the white population. It is found that, although the white hospital population far exceeded that of the negro element, the number of deaths from tuberculosis was only 886 among the former against 936 among the latter, or nearly twice as frequent in proportion to the average hospital population.

Diseases of the respiratory organs also show an excessive prevalence and rate of fatality among the negro population. The decennial rate of prevalence was 9.13 for the white and 14.36 for the colored population, while the actual per cent of mortality was 31.43 for the former and 46.49 for the latter.

All of the venereal diseases and syphilis are shown to have been excessively prevalent and exceptionally fatal to the colored population, a result fully in harmony, in this as well as the previous instances, with the results of other investigations into the mortality of the colored population.

Fractures and dislocations are shown to have been slightly less fatal among the negro element of the hospital population. This is in harmony with the observed fact that "when viewed from the purely surgical operative standpoint, the white and the negro are practically alike." And on this point Dr. Matas further remarks:—

"There are no apparent differences between the races on the operating table. The same technique applies to both equally as well; and often, especially in the matter of resistance to shock, the negro appears to better advantage than the white man. In the general and local reactions of the tissues to infection there are some differences between the races. It is in the histogenetic tendencies of the tissues that we find the real surgical contrast between them. If we are to judge from this alone the race reveals in this last particular a marked tendency to degeneration." (p. 125.)

The work will prove extremely valuable to the student of the vital problems of the white and colored population of the South, and it is with deep regret that I find myself compelled to deal in such an inadequate manner with a work of such exceptional interest and value.

FREDERICK L. HOFFMAN.

MULHALL'S STATISTICS.

Industries and Wealth of Nations. By Michael G. Mulhall. Longmans, Green & Co. London, New York, and Bombay. 1896. Pp. 451.

Once more has Mr. Mulhall given us an illustration of his peculiar gifts. Statisticians for a long time stood in awe before Mr. Mulhall,